artist statement

Like a dancing thing wrapped, draped, held up, heavy, put low, dancing, sagging, flying, falling, sitting, seen, felt, smelt, being.. *Being. Being. Any Black Being.* is a figure and ensemble of figures, including us attending the space, in situ polyphonic resonance. In the course of 7 days (April 23 - 30) the work makes ritual disruption to gallery and university culture that wants determined lines, public private boundaries, high rising notions and finished exhibition products for viewing. Our Black children rollerblading the university hallways with abandon, squealing with joy, inviting stares and smiles; We don't stop them, we let them be. They are helping shape the figure alongside the eleventh hour asks of folks we hope will generate continuous community authorship of the work. This is the Black figure's finesse. A time out of time form that you must make time for, be in and hope for. Sankofa thru in a day or two to witness new questions in the life death life cycle of the figure(s). We are late with the work and right on time. Our work is ritual made in the space beyond thought, borrowed from the hymn raising rituals of my maternal grandmother's people from burkeville, alabama. When asked provocative queries, I try to listen and not feel the need to answer for the work. The figure asks me/we to disrupt the gaze of valuation defining much of the visual art world today and critically focus on the process of a thing happening with and without an audience... the grand kin call it devotional space. The shared meals on the gallery floor, the firing of the wood at night, the libations poured when no visitors are in the gallery looking, the verbal articulations of family photos, the deranging vernacular, how the infrared light interacts with the cells, the eyes softening for dark light, the collection of railroad ties and boxes and random things that BIPOC labor built, nighttime travels with Maroons, the walks, the repurposed fabric embedded with the gumbo balls and leaves from a windy 2019 November night in Chimborazo Park, the mind's decision to sit or not in the single chair provided, to pick up a peppermint, add a clothespin to the visible lines and the already heavy figure. Unearth, lay it down, add your heavy and wonder will the fishing wire bear the weight? And maybe you will avoid the Black thing all together. These are our questions to reckon with. Thank you for joining in the reckoning. What we experience on day 1 will be embellished by day 4 and day 6 will bring on something new. Between an unplugged and plugged state, the figure *is* sound. It continuously tells us *what it is* and we curate each day to make the translations clear. This black thing is an ensemble devotion both to raise you and to pull you low to the innermost parts of us.

devotional texts

Andaiye. *The Point Is to Change the World*

Christina Sharpe. *In the Wake*

Fred Moten. *content not to be a single being. Stolen Life: Presence, disidentification and Refusal*

Jessica Marie Johnson. *Wicked Flesh*

Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World

Tiffany Lethabo King. *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*

Audre Lorde. *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*

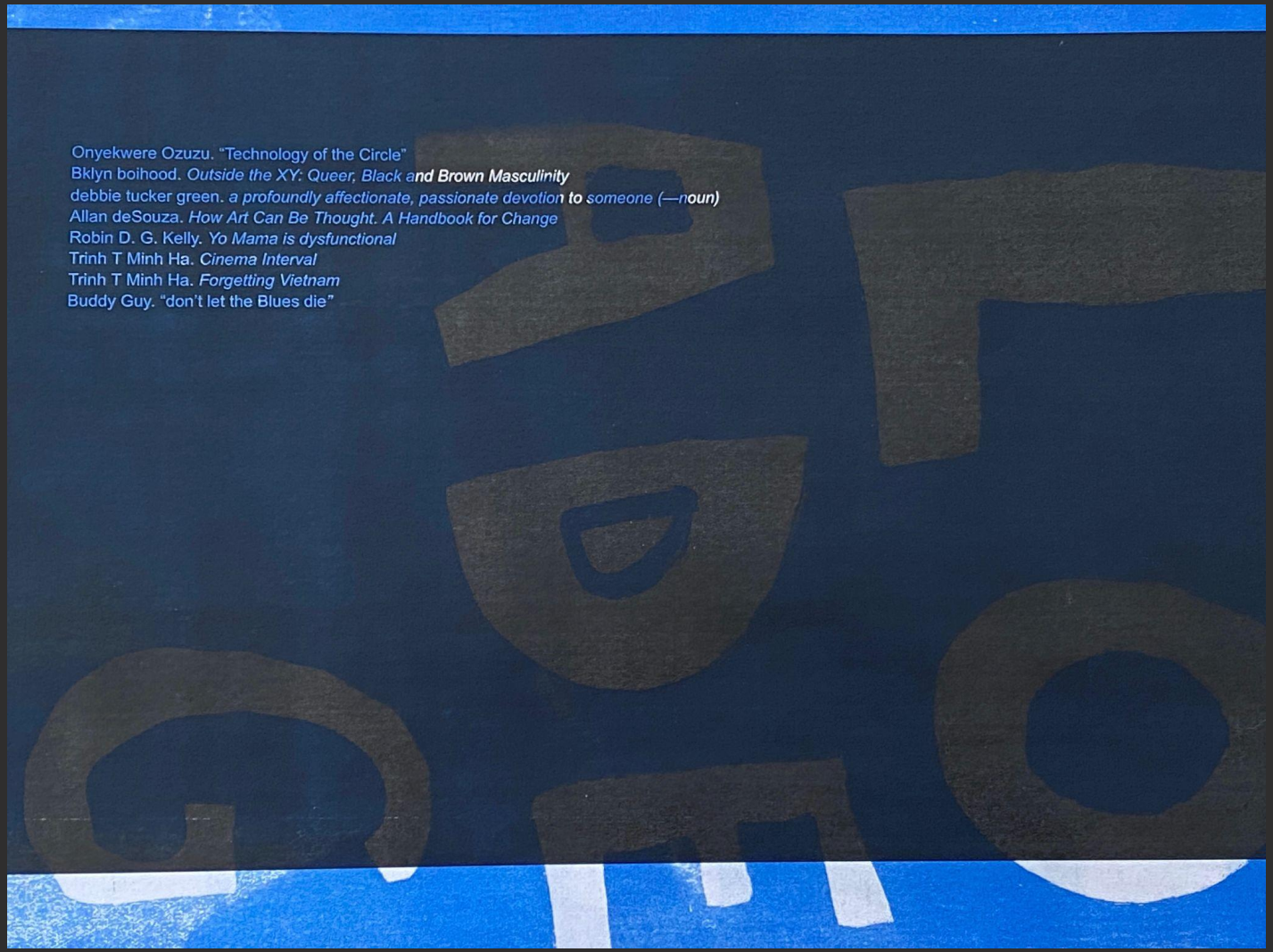
Black is an attitude. said James Brown

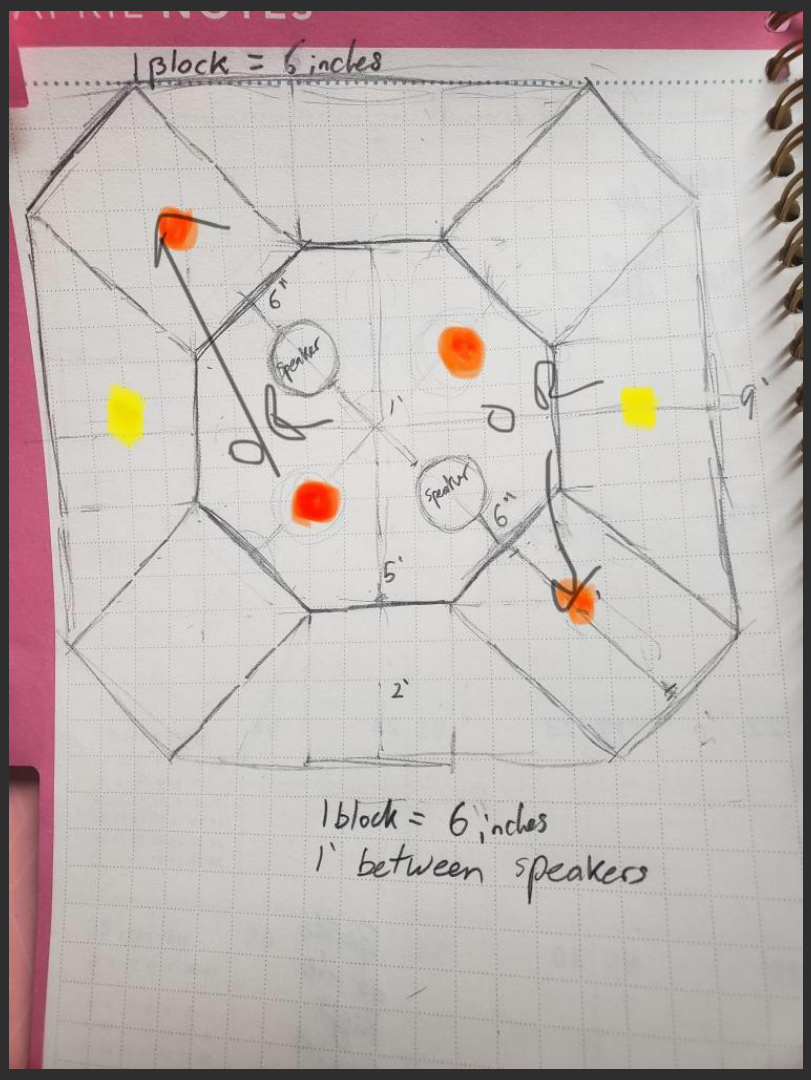
Being.
Being.
Any Black Being.

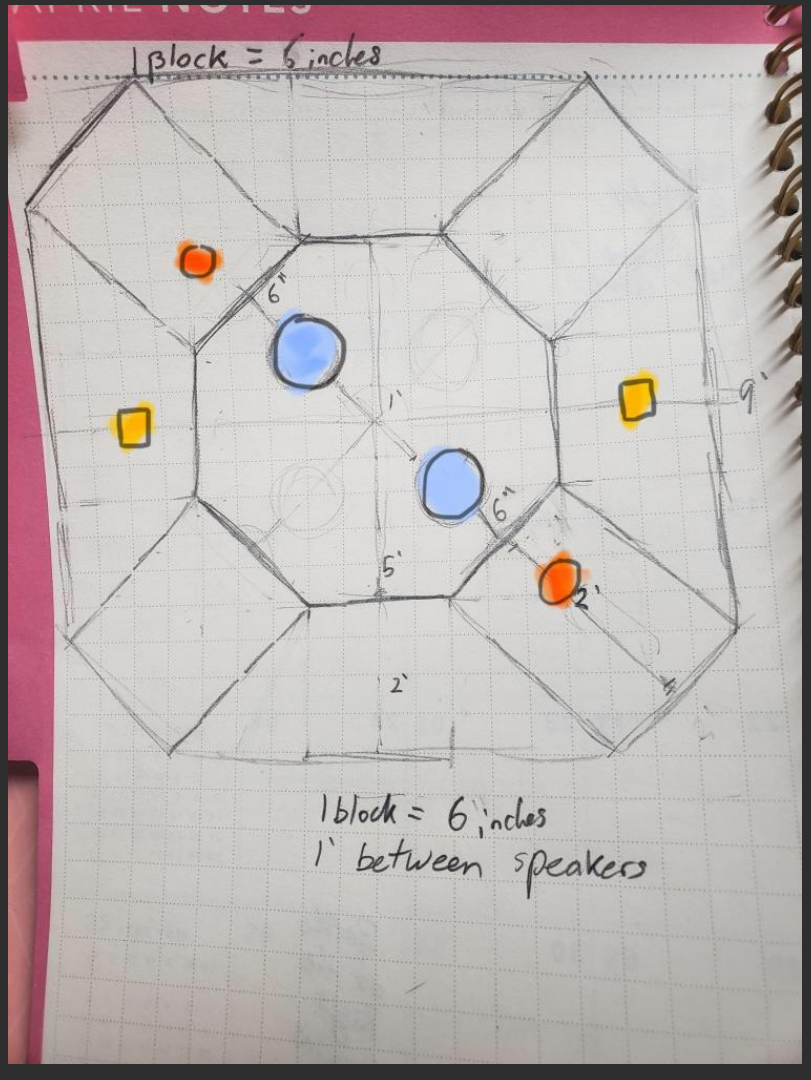
curated by muthi reed

2021 April 23 -30 vcu fine arts building gallery *apart from familiar, a part from dream* 1st year mfa candidacy group exhibition with Bella Kubo and Chad Mundie

mixed media
figure(s) : fabric, djembe, chair, plant fiber, fishing wire, chair, me/we
sound system : mom&pop speaker boxes, fired wood speaker enclosure, sub speakers, 3-channel sound mix, audio amplifiers
nest : five infrared lights, 3-part harmony zine/graphic score, peppermints, glossy clothes pins, local pecans, bay leaf, lemongrass, st. john's wort, lavender, Black Soap from Ghana
collaborators : [zine design, figure, curatorial support] Angela Davis Johnson (she/her) - https://www.angeladavisjohnson.com, [speaker enclosure] Ashe Johnson (they/them) - VCU Sculpture & Extended Media 4th year undergrad, [speaker enclosure] Josh Brewer (he/him) - VCU Sculpture & Extended Media 4th year undergrad, [zine printing] Clown Kisses Press, [tech support] Elegba Folklore Society, Russell White (they/them) - VCU KI Equipment Coordinator, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo (she/they) - VCU Painting + Printmaking 1st year MFA candidate, River City Market, 2 Fish and 5 Loaves Global Market, Nile Ethiopian Bistro, Emaree Johnson, Kinsley Johnson, 1708 Gallery/ InLight, Sage Crump, Wesley Taylor
muthi reed mfa candidacy committee : Semi Ryu, Orla McHardy, Cara Benedetto


Onyekwere Ozuzu. “Technology of the Circle”
Bklyn boihood. *Outside the XY: Queer, Black and Brown Masculinity*
debbie tucker green. *a profoundly affectionate, passionate devotion to someone (—noun)*
Allan deSouza. *How Art Can Be Thought. A Handbook for Change*
Robin D. G. Kelly. *Yo Mama is dysfunctional*
Trinh T Minh Ha. *Cinema Interval*
Trinh T Minh Ha. *Forgetting Vietnam*
Buddy Guy. “don’t let the Blues die”


1 block = 6 inches
6"
Speaker
1'
Speaker
6"
9'
5'
2'
1 block = 6 inches
1' between speakers


1 block = 6 inches
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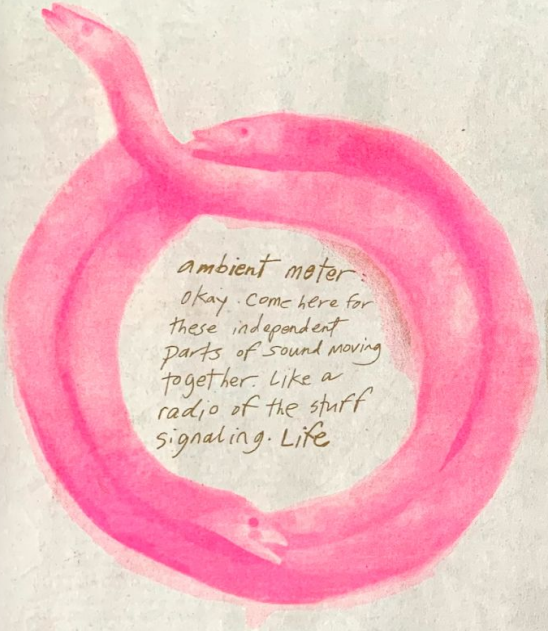
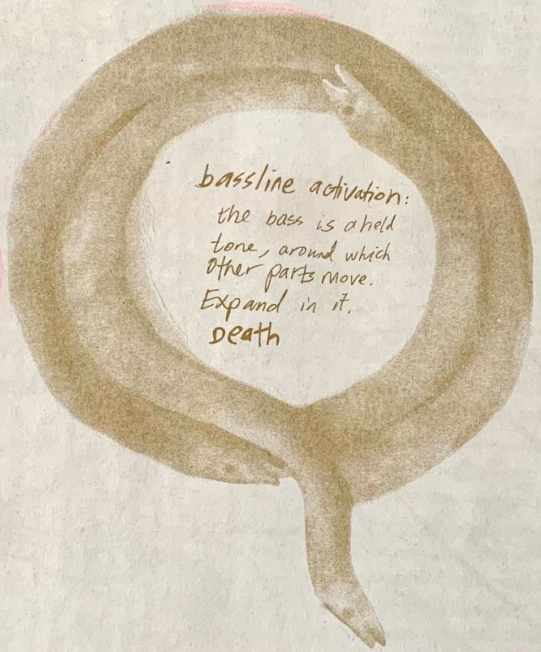
1 block = 6 inches
1' between speakers

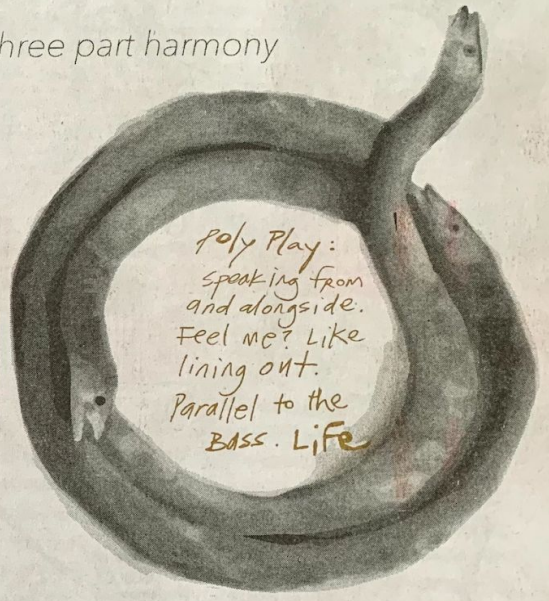
https://youtu.be/bqkKVvp6GP8

Being.
Being.
Any Black Being.

a three part harmony

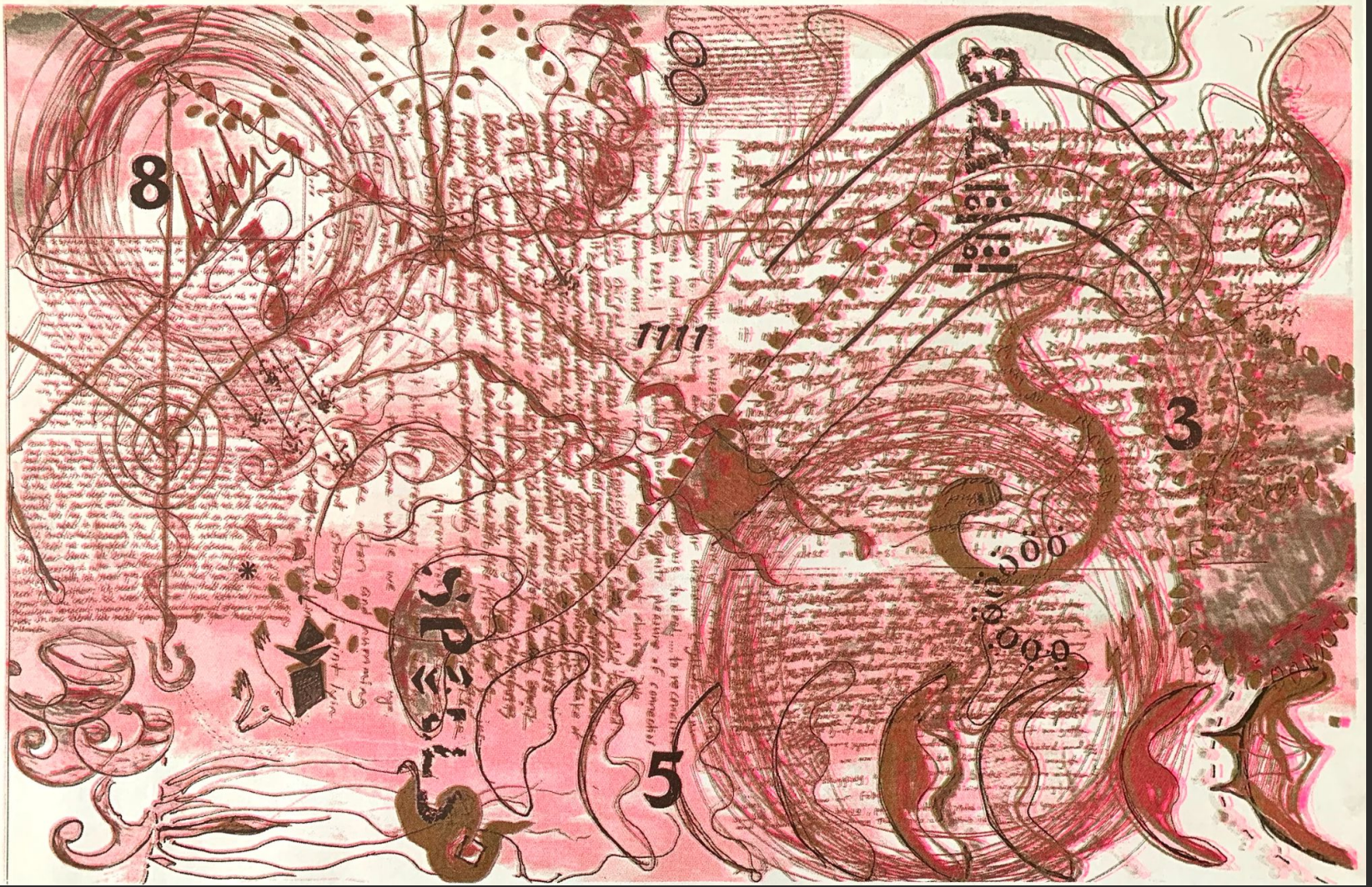

ambient meter:
Okay. Come here for these independent parts of sound moving together. Like a radio of the stuff signaling. Life





SCREAMIN SIRENES

a Hollerin Space zine cc2021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watch the live performance